CLAIMS

1   1. In a video on demand system for supplying video data in response to a user request, the

2   improvement comprising:

3   a.   A plurality of video servers each capable of supplying video data to said user;

4   and

5   b.   A multimedia application server responsively coupled to said plurality of video

6   servers which receives said request from said user and directs a particular one of said

7   plurality of video servers to supply said video data to said user in response to said user

8   request.

1   2. The video on demand system of claim 1 further comprising logic which selects said

2   particular one of said plurality of video servers based upon said particular one of said plurality of

3   video servers already having said video data loaded.

1   3. The video on demand system of claim 1 further comprising logic which selects said

2   particular one of said plurality of video servers based upon which of said plurality of video servers

3   is least utilized.

1   4. The video on demand system of claim 1 further comprising logic which selects said

2   particular one of said plurality of video servers based upon which of said plurality of video servers

3   has sufficient unused storage space.

1   5. The video on demand system of claim 1 further comprising logic which replaces a

2   previous video program from said one of said plurality of video servers with said video data.

1   6. An apparatus comprising:

2   a. A video program request generated by a user;

3   b. A plurality of video servers each capable of streaming said video program to

4   said user; and

5   c. A multimedia application server which receives said video program request and

6   directs one of said plurality of video servers to streaming said video program to said user.

1   7. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said multimedia application server further

2   comprises logic for selecting said one of said plurality of video servers if said one of said plurality

3   of video servers has already loaded said video program.

1   8. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said multimedia server further comprises

2   logic for selecting said one of said plurality of video servers if said one of said plurality of video

3   servers is least busy.

1   9. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said multimedia application server further

2   comprises a logic for selecting said one of said plurality of video servers if said one of said

3   plurality of video servers has sufficient unused storage space.

1   10. An apparatus according to claim 6 wherein said multimedia application server further

2   comprises logic which directs said one of said plurality of video servers to swap said video

3   program for an existing video program.

1   11. A video on demand system comprising:

2   a. Means for receiving a user request for a video program;

3   b. Plurality of means for streaming said video program; and

4   c. Means responsively coupled to said receiving means and said plurality of

5   streaming means for directing one of said plurality of streaming means to stream said

6   video program to said user in response to said request.

1   12. A video on demand system according to claim 11 wherein said directing means

2   further comprises means for selecting said one of said plurality of streaming means having said

3   video program resident.

1   13. A video on demand system according to claim 11 wherein said directing means

2   further comprises means for choosing said one of said plurality of streaming means having

3   sufficient free storage to store said video program.

1   14. A video on demand system according to claim 11 wherein said directing means

2   further comprises means for identifying said one of said plurality of streaming means having a

3   previous video program which may be removed to accommodate said video program.

1   15. A video on demand system according to claim 14 wherein said directing means

2   further comprises means for determining that said one of said plurality of streaming means has

3   sufficient capacity for streaming said video program.

1   16. A method of selecting one of a plurality of video servers for streaming a video

2   program to a user comprising:

3   a. Receiving a message from said user requesting said video program; and

4   b. Selecting one of a plurality of video servers to stream said video program to

5   said user.

1   17. A method according to claim 16 wherein said selecting step further comprises:

2   a. Determining which of said plurality of video servers already has said video

3   program resident.

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1   18. A method according to claim 16 wherein said selecting step further comprises:

2   a. Ascertaining which of said plurality of video servers has sufficient storage space

3   to contain said video program.

1   19. A method according to claim 16 wherein said selecting step further comprises:

2   a. Directing said one of said plurality of video servers unload a previously loaded

3   video program and load said video program.

1   20. A method according to claim 16 wherein said directing step further comprises:

2   a. Inhibiting said unloading of said previously loaded video program if the

3   performance utilization of said previously loaded program is greater than the performance

4   utilization of said video program.